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(54) Title: ONE PIECE SHIM

(57) Abstract: A one-piece or otherwise unitary annular shim member made from a perforated metallic material is used to maintain a space between stacked annular preforms during a manufacturing process, such as densification. The metallic material used preferably can withstand at least the temperatures encountered during densification. The one-piece structure advantageously simplifies the arrangement of the preforms in a process chamber and causes less deformation in the preforms. In one example, the shim member is made from a metallic mesh and may utilize a crimped weave structure.